

Message Text

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O 182138Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL ISTANBUL IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL IZMIR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:PEPR, TU, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL MEETING WITH ARMENIAN AMERICANS

REF: ANKARA 3810

FOLLOWING OF REMARKS OF PRESIDENT CARTER
AT RECEPTION FOR ARMENIAN AMERICANS IN THE EAST ROOM,
DATE MAY 16,1978.

BEGIN TEXT:

THE PRESIDENT: THANK YOU. THANK YOU VERY MUCH. THE FIRST
THING I WANT TO SAY IS THAT IT IS AN HONOR FOR ROSALYNN
AND ME TO HAVE YOU HERE IN OUR HOME, WHICH IS ALSO YOUR
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HOME.

IN PREPARATION FOR THE PREVIOUS MEETING THAT I HAD WITH
YOUR GROUP IN THE ROOSEVELT ROOM IN THE WEST WING, I WENT
BACK AND STUDIED SOME OF THE HISTORY OF THE ARMENIAN
PEOPLE. AND, AGAIN, I AM IMPRESSED WITH THE TREMENDOUS
CONTRIBUTION THAT YOU HAVE MADE TO OUR OWN NATION, THE

HIGH EXAMPLES THAT YOU HAVE SET IN LEADERSHIP, IN MUSIC, ARTS, IN BUSINESS, IN POLITICS, IN EDUCATION, AND IN YOUR SOUND POLITICAL JUDGMENT IN CHOOSING TO BE DEMOCRATS;

(LAUGHTER) ALSO IN YOUR VERY EARLY SUPPORT OF ME WHEN I RAN FOR PRESIDENT. YOURS WAS THE FIRST GROUP THAT HAD CONFIDENCE IN ME, AND I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER IT. AND YOUR HELP FOR OUR PARTY AND OUR COUNTRY ARE SOMETHING THAT I APPRECIATE VERY MUCH.

AS ONE OF THE OLDEST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD, YOU HAVE, I THINK, STRUGGLED WITH GREAT COURAGE AND TENACITY TO PRE-SERVE YOUR OWN IDENTITY, YOUR OWN CUSTOMS, AND TO IN A VERY MODEST WAY LET THE WORLD COME TO APPRECIATE WHAT YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED.

I FEEL CLOSE TO YOU BECAUSE YOU WERE THE FIRST CHRISTIAN PEOPLE, FIRST CHRISTIAN NATION, AND BECAUSE OF THAT, YOUR DEEP RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, I DOUBT THAT ANY OTHER PEOPLE HAVE EVER SUFFERED MORE. I KNOW THAT THROUGH THE EARLY YEARS OF THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR PEOPLE'S HOME, YOU SUFFERED A GREAT DEAL. BUT IT IS GENERALLY NOT KNOWN IN THE WORLD THAT IN THE YEARS PRECEDING 1916 THERE WAS A CONCERTED EFFORT MADE TO ELIMINATE ALL OF THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE, PROBABLY ONE OF THE GREATEST TRAGEDIES THAT EVER BEFELL ANY GROUP. AND THERE WEREN'T ANY NUREMBERG TRIALS. THERE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WEREN'T ANY HIGH PUBLIC FIGURES WHO RECOGNIZED HOW MUCH YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES HAD TO SUFFER.

WELL, I FEEL VERY DEEPLY THAT I, AS PRESIDENT, OUGHT TO MAKE SURE THAT THIS IS NEVER FORGOTTEN, NOT ONLY THE TRAGEDY OF YOUR HISTORY, BUT ALSO THE PRESENT CONTRIBUTIONS THAT YOU MAKE AND THE BRIGHT FUTURE THAT YOU HAVE.

I AM VERY GRATEFUL THAT THERE ARE ABOUT A MILLION ARMENIAN AMERICANS WHO PROVIDE STABILITY IN A UNIQUE PLACE IN OUR NATION'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE, AND I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO YOU.

I MIGHT ADD ONE OTHER THING. YOU ARE VERY GENEROUS PEOPLE. SOME OF YOU HAVE BECOME QUITE INFLUENTIAL, QUITE AFFLUENT AND QUITE FAMOUS BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPERB ACHIEVEMENTS. AND THIS IS A MATTER OF GREAT PRIDE TO ME AS IT IS TO YOU.

SO I JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW THAT, IN A FEW WORDS, AS PRESIDENT, AND ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, I APPRECIATE WHAT YOU ARE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

END TEXT. VANCE

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